

FREE RESOURCE

Human-made music: what to keep

A checklist and per-track log for composers, songwriters and producers who want to show how their music was made, and answer "is any of this AI?" with confidence.

From DADAAUDIO · www.dadaaudio.com. This is a practical guide, not legal advice.

How to use it

1. Go through the checklist once and set up your habits (folders, naming, backups).
2. For every track you release, pitch or deliver, fill in one row of the track log.
3. Keep the log and the files together, and back them up somewhere other than your working drive.

1. While you write and produce

- ☐ Save the project/session under a new name at each meaningful stage (sketch, demo, after notes, final) instead of overwriting it
- ☐ Keep MIDI files, especially parts you played in
- ☐ Keep early sketches: voice memos, phone recordings, piano ideas
- ☐ Keep scores, lead sheets, chord charts and notebook pages (scan or photograph paper)
- ☐ Bounce a dated version whenever the track changes direction
- ☐ Write a few lines of notes as you go: what the track is for, what's live, what's virtual, which tools you used
- ☐ If any AI tool touches the track, write down which tool, when, and exactly what it did

2. Recording sessions

- ☐ Date and place of each session
- ☐ Names of players and singers, with what they played
- ☐ Raw takes (not just the comped result)
- ☐ Session musician agreements or invoices
- ☐ Engineer and studio credits

3. Delivery and versions

- ☐ Final main mix, dated
- ☐ Alt mixes, instrumental, cutdowns (e.g. 30 s, 60 s), each named clearly
- ☐ Stems for every delivered version
- ☐ Earlier versions kept, not deleted, after a new mix replaces them

4. Paperwork

- ☐ Split sheet signed (or agreed in writing) by every writer and producer
- ☐ Credits with roles, IPI numbers and societies
- ☐ Sample and loop licences: pack or source, licence terms, which tracks use them
- ☐ The brief and client notes for commissioned work, plus your replies
- ☐ Any warranty you gave about AI use in a licence, with the exact wording

5. Stating AI use

Pick the line that is true for each track and use it consistently in metadata, notes, pitches and licences.

Case	What it means	Example wording
No generative AI	A person wrote, performed and produced everything; ordinary production tools only	"Written, performed and produced by [name]. No generative AI was used."
AI-assisted	A person made the music; an AI tool did a defined job	"Composed and produced by [name]. [Tool] was used for [job]; no part of the final audio was generated."
AI-generated elements	Part of the audio or composition came from a generative tool	"Contains AI-generated [element], created with [tool]. Composition/production of the rest by [name]."

- ☐ AI statement written in the track's notes or metadata
- ☐ Same statement used in pitches and library submissions
- ☐ Society registration checked against your society's current AI policy (e.g. ASCAP, BMI, SOCAN, PRS, SIAE, GEMA, SACEM)

6. Storage

- ☐ Working files and the log kept together per track
- ☐ Original file dates preserved (copy, don't re-export, when archiving)
- ☐ At least one backup off your working drive
- ☐ Nothing deleted just because a newer version exists

7. Answering a supervisor

Template:

No generative AI was used on this track. I wrote and produced it in [month, year]; [live parts] were recorded on [date] at [place], the rest is played in on virtual instruments. I can share stems or an early bounce if useful.

Track log

Fill in one row per track. In the spreadsheet version each column is a field.

Track title	Started (date)	Finished (date)	Writers and splits	Players / recording dates	Session file(s) kept	MIDI kept	Early versions kept (dates)	Stems kept	Samples / loops used (licence)	AI tools used (tool, what it did)	AI state
					Yes / No	Yes / No		Yes / No		None / ...	
					Yes / No	Yes / No		Yes / No		None / ...	
					Yes / No	Yes / No		Yes / No		None / ...	
					Yes / No	Yes / No		Yes / No		None / ...	
					Yes / No	Yes / No		Yes / No		None / ...	

Good to know

- The EU AI Act's transparency rules (Article 50, from 2 August 2026) apply to providers and professional deployers of AI systems. They don't require a composer who doesn't use AI to label anything.
- The US Copyright Office protects only human-authored expression; prompts alone aren't enough, and AI-generated material that is more than de minimis should be excluded when registering.
- ASCAP, BMI and SOCAN accept partially AI-generated works (since October 2025) but not works made entirely with AI. Other societies have their own rules.